

MINUTES FOR November 18, 2008
MEETING OF THE PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

Members Present: Alyce Ortuzar; James D'Andrea for Sylvia Morrison, Peter Moe, MSHA, MHSO; Alan Migdall;; John Britton, Maryland Municipal League; Erwin Mack; Bill Frick, Chairman; Leslie Hamm, BCC Regional Service Center for Ken Hartman; Ben Stutz for Councilmember Ervin; John Howley; Steve Friedman

Members Absent:; Bill Bronrott, Vice Chairman; Gerald Donaldson; Charles Kines, MNCPPC; Linda Katz; Lt. Ronald Smith, MCPD

County Staff: Art Holmes; Tom Pogue; Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Bruce Johnston ; Larry McGoogin SRTS Coordinator; Roselle Paquette

Guests: Chris Conklin VHB, Inc.; Carrie Sanders, City of Rockville, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Colleen Mitchell; Doris DePaz; Jack Strausman; Charlie Crawford, Commission on People with Disabilities;

Agenda Items:

1. Introductions
2. Committee Business
3. Road Code Revisions
4. Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee – Mission and Future
5. Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and CountyStat Review
6. Other Pedestrian Safety Activities
7. Committee comment/New Items
8. Adjourn

Item 1: Introductions. The meeting came to order at 7:07 p.m. A large group was assembled and extra seats were needed. The meeting was conducted by Chairman Bill Frick, who expressed his appreciation with being Chairman and wished everyone luck – Erwin Mack was welcomed as the new PTSAC Chairman. Bill stated this would be his last meeting as a member of the PTSAC, though he intends to stay involved

Jeff reported that the CE had approved the recommended new members and incumbent reconfirmations . These candidates will now be confirmed by Council for their appointment.

Peter Moe moved to review September minutes at end of meeting.

Jeff Dunckel noted staff will be working on updating ped website

New visiting guests who had an interest in the committee's business were introduced: Charlie Crawford for the HHS Commission on Elderly and Disabled introduced himself;

he would like to attend future meetings to be kept abreast of issues for his commission. Carrie Sanders introduced herself; she is the new Pedestrian Safety Coordinator for the City of Rockville.

Dunckel also introduced Larry McGoogin, the County's new Safe Routes to Schools Coordinator. He would be working with Traffic Engineering in implementing the grants program improving safety at the County's schools. In this capacity, McGoogin will be working with the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee as well.

Item 2: Committee Business. New membership binders were distributed. Dunckel described the new binders created to assist committee members. Binders contained background info on the committee, membership information and other material related to pedestrian safety. Steve Friedman requested the original Blue Ribbon report on ped safety be included in the binder as a reference.

Dunckel distributed agendas of the Steering Committees and Implementation Groups, as requested by the committee at the September meeting. Discussion of these meetings followed.

Item 3: Road Code Revisions. Bruce Johnston and Chris Conklin of VHB gave a briefing of the revised version to the County's road code "context sensitive road design standards." A stakeholder group was directed by Council to be formed. Bruce Johnston reviewed the agencies represented by 24 members. PTSAC was represented at the stakeholders meetings by Erwin Mack. The group met from November 2007 through June 2008. Topics included in discussions included ped safety. The proposed revised regulation focused on five areas :1. road design and their application; 2. target speeds for roadways; 3. lane widths; 4. storm water run-off ; and 5. tree placement.

Conalin reviewed Road Code goals and major issues (i.e. lane width, trees and target speeds) using a power point presentation and slides.

Alan Migdall asked if back-in/angle parking was addressed. Conklin said it was not. That topic was too detailed for this regulation. Discussion occurred regarding lane widths and bicycle use of the lanes, tree placement along roads, etc.. Conklin noted changes to the proposal as a result of public comment.

Johnston described the process: the month of September was the public comment period. Changes were made. There are still remaining issues to be resolved between park and planning and DOT. Discussions regarding these issues have taken place at the Director level. The final regulations are expected to be taken to the Council on December 1.

Migdall asked of how these compare to other jurisdictions nationally? Conklin noted they are cutting edge ideas but unique to Montgomery County; they impact subdivision review and development, as well as DOT projects. Alan opinioned that the PTSAC should have been involved earlier in the process. Frick indicated the process of involving stakeholders was advocated by the Council from the beginning and integral to the

development of the code revisions. Conklin added the issue is not closed - that there will be modification over time. "The regs are by no means fixed," Conklin noted. Erwin Mack and Ron Smith, both of the PTSAC, were members of the stakeholders group and actively involved in the proceedings.

Item 4: Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee – Mission and Future.

Migdall opened the discussion by noting his analysis that pedestrian collisions in Montgomery County over time were increasing at a rate greater than the population was growing. Rather than improving, the situation was getting worse. He urged greater involvement of committee in setting the agenda for the County's ped safety program. Frick provided some history on the committee and its roles to implement the Blue Ribbon panel recommendations. John Howley sees a role to reach consensus on issues, produce written positions, and communicate those to appropriate parties. The committee is to be advisory to both the County Executive and the County Council.

The question was asked: what was role of PTSAC in creating the County Executive's Pedestrian Safety Initiative. Much discussion ensued. Frick noted the committee had developed a list of 20 recommendations that were given to County Executive and Councilwoman Ervin; these were included in the County Executive's initiative issued last December (2007). Ben Stutz noted his review of an HHS committee found the most effective aspect of the committee is they took positions on major issues, as well as took on projects of their own. Erwin Mack noted all but two members of PTSAC are new now; now we'll have some stability. Colleen Mitchell, future member of the committee, expressed her desire to influence public policy of pedestrian safety issues.

Peter Moe noted that one requirement of the Committee was to file an annual report. This was due in November. Moe suggested sending a notice to the County Executive indicating the Committee would be working on a report for submission in the future.

Item 5: Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and CountyStat Review. Time began running out. Dunckel quickly described the recent review of pedestrian safety by the CountyStat Office. Copies of the review were distributed to the committee. The revised Action Plan for implementing the County Executive's Pedestrians Safety Initiative was handed out- comments from the committee were requested.

Item 6: Pothole Pedestrian Safety Activities. Dunckel handed out information on Santa in the Crosswalk event on December 3 and the World Remembrance Day March in Silver Spring's holiday parade on November 22. The StreetSmart Regional Ped Safety Campaign was held at BCC High School; a new spring campaign is being planned.

Item 7: Committee Comments/New Items. Fred Lees' group has completed the first pedestrian safety road audit of the first HIA – Piney Branch Road. The contractor performed audit over 2 days. MCPD, community reps and other parties involved. Road was evaluated from Flower Avenue to the Prince George's county Line. Audit produced a series of recommendations; the audit team viewed area at varied times of day.

Dunckel briefed the committee on the pedestrian safety perception survey planned to gather perception data before the improvements were started. Group reviewed the survey instrument. Colleen Mitchell suggested that the survey ask how people prefer to receive their information. Erwin Mack noted in Langley area, people use radio heavily. Mack asked Fred what is happening with the current construction underway. Fred explained this is a State project: they are eliminating channelized right turns and narrowing the turning radius at the corners – to slow turning traffic. Mack asked about potential to add an additional ped safety sign in the area. Lees responded that State plans to relocate existing signs.

Dunckel proposed that meetings may need to happen more often than every other month as pedestrian safety becomes a more active program. Mack asked that a proposal to hold meetings monthly be sent out as an email request, and members respond to the proposal. It was also agreed that a larger meeting room was needed to accommodate all the people attending these meetings.

Lastly, a proposal issued by the County Council today, November 18, proposed legislation that would dedicate 50% of speed camera revenues to the purchase of fire and rescue apparatus, and dedicate 35% to pedestrians safety. Of that 35%, the Council proposes to give 25% of the 35% to municipalities with speed cameras but no police department (this would qualify Poolesville for this revenue. It was unclear whether any other municipalities would qualify under this provision. Much discussion ensued. Much more needs to be known before the committee can weigh in on the debate.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

